TWIN CITY LINES

Spring 2008

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TWIN CITY LINES

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

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CORRECTIONS AND NEW INFO

Since the last issue, we know a bit more about Fargo-Moorhead streetcars, thanks to feedback from several readers. Cars #8-11, acquired in 1905, are something of a mystery. The article says they were built by St. Louis Car Co., but Russ Olson consulted the list of St. Louis cars and can find no reference to them. Marks Sims has a different theory below.

The mysterious O. Ry. & L. Co., previous owner of the second group of open cars purchased in 1920, turns out to be the Ottumwa (IA) Railway & Light Co. The page 15 photo of car 59 was actually taken at the Ottumwa carhouse. Russ Olson and Tom Fairbairn figured it out, as well as Mark Sims, who adds:

"The Ottumwa Railway & Light was controlled by HM Byllesby & Co. starting in 1906. Byllesby also controlled Fargo starting in 1911. In 1906, as part of the modernization of the Ottumwa line (service started on 11/28/1889), new open and closed cars were bought from American Car Co. The open cars were assigned odd numbers and the closed (semi-convertible) cars were assigned even numbers. Open cars would have been 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67 and 69.

According to a 1922 Ottumwa valuation I found in the University of Iowa Special Collections, cars 57, 59, 65 and 67 were off the roster by 1922, so I think that those four cars were either sold, or transferred to Fargo for Fair use. In 1920 Ottumwa was re-equipping with one-man lightweight cars and the open cars were surplus. It is possible that the remaining three might have been transferred to Fargo to make the full seven open cars reported.

There were actually two predecessor horsecar lines in Fargo, one in 1882 and another in 1886. On your roster, I have not found evidence cars 8-11 were built by St. Louis Car. I have run across references in the Electric Railway Journal that they were ordered from McGuire Cummings, but have not found any other references to back this up.

Fargo-Moorhead actually owned two sweepers. One was ordered in 1905 and the second was bought in 1912, according to the ERJ reports of car purchases. I have also uncovered a reference to another work car that probably was numbered A1, my thought is that it probably was a line car or flat car."

Blair Dollery and Ken Albrecht, who know their tractors, both have a different theory about the rear cover photo, which shows a long line of tractors parading down Broadway in Fargo. The caption says it might be a farmer demonstration perhaps against low crop prices. Blair and Ken think it's a publicity photo showing a delivery of new tractors to an implement dealer. The tractors are identical, apparently McCormick-Deering 10-20s. They look too clean and lack some of the attachments of a working tractor.

MSM News Summary

See Streetcar Currents for the full story (www.trolleyride.org).

Carbarn Sprinkler Fund within sight of goal

The last issue of Twin City Lines reported that the George Isaacs Carbarn Sprinkler Fund had passed $60,000. Thanks to a pair of foundation grants and additional member donations, the fund now exceeds $85,000. The goal is $100,000.

MSM has received a $10,000 grant from the Pohlad Family Foundation, thanks to the efforts of Arby and Jean Sundstrom, long time friends of the Pohlads. Arby Sundstrom was a TCRT motorman in the 1940s. He rose through the ranks to become a supervisor. When Carl Pohlad's company assumed ownership of TCRT in the late 1950s, Sundstrom became the General Manager and held that position until the transit system was sold to the Metropolitan Transit Commission in 1970. He continued to work for the Pohlad family, managing several of their businesses.

Unfortunately, Sundstrom passed away from a long illness just weeks after the grant to MSM was approved.

The Onan Family Foundation, a long-time financial supporter of the museum, has granted $10,000 to the Sprinkler Fund. This is in addition to their $10,000 grant in 2007. George Isaacs was a career employee of Onan Corporation, and established the funding relationship with the foundation in the 1970s.

French becomes MSM Chair

The MSM Board elected Dave French as its new Chair. Dave is a long-time volunteer who heads the Training Department and has created a succession of colorful characters and story lines for the annual Halloween Trolley.

French succeeds Jim Vaitkunas, who guided the museum through its separation from the Minnesota Transportation Museum and the TEA21 track reconstruction. Including

Front Cover: The photographer is in the second floor window of the Minneapolis Greyhound Bus depot, overlooking the complicated intersection of 7th Street, 1st Avenue North and Glenwood Avenue. A 28th Avenue-N. Emerson car is turning from 7th onto 1st Avenue, and that is puzzling because the line didn't normally pass through this intersection. Perhaps Washington Avenue is closed for some reason and this is a detour move. The N. Emerson line had an unusual history. Learn more about it on page 15. Minneapolis Star-Tribune photo, Minnesota Historical Society collection.
Inside front cover: This issue features a motorman's first-hand account of working a busy afternoon run on the Chicago-Penn-Fremont line (see page 5). Here a Chicago-Fremont car headed for north Minneapolis on 8th Street crosses 1st Avenue N. Minnesota Historical Society collection.

his tenure as MTM Traction General Superintendent, Vaitkunas headed the streetcar organization for nine years. Jim will continue as Operations Manager and Currents Editor.

More MSM photos on Minnesota Reflections website

Since late 2007, the Minnesota Reflections website of historic photos has featured 674 from the MSM collection. That number has now grown to almost 800, with the approval of a third group of 120. The latest group features numerous Duluth photos.

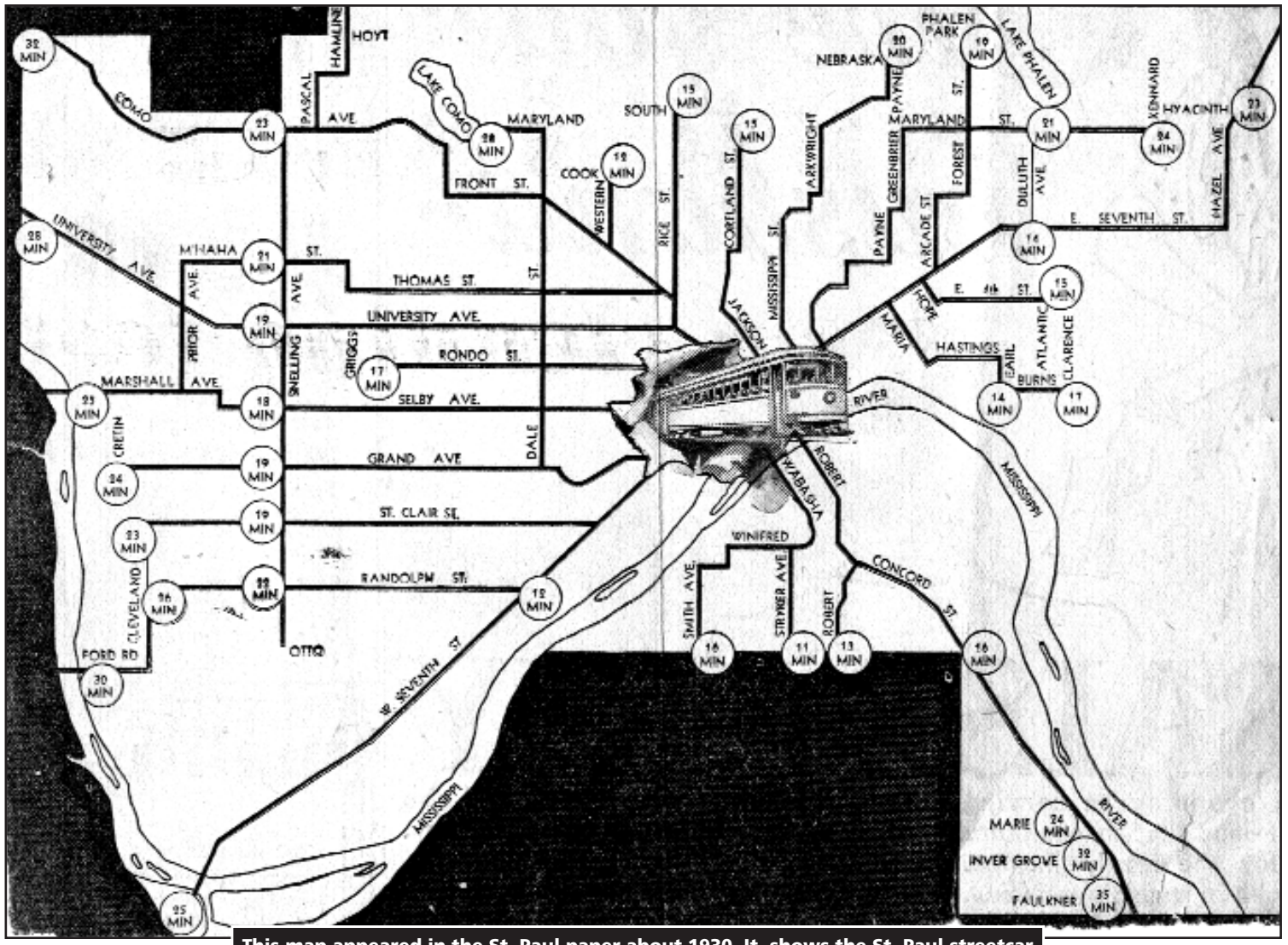
In a surprising development, MSM photos have received more viewings than those of any of the other 70+ institutions on the website. The number of pages viewed reached 136,000 in March 2008. To access the photos, go to the MSM website at www.trolleyride.org and click on Historic Photos.

New depot displays

Visitors to the Linden Hills depots are familiar with the highly detailed displays created some years ago by Michael Buck. Recognizing that it was time for something new, Mike has created completely new exhibits for this season. They feature historic Minnesota streetcar postcards.

Merchandising sets sales record

In 2007, Merchandise Manager Charles Barthold reports that sales hit a new record of $34,000, accounting for 22 percent of operating revenues. Look for a line of new T-shirts at the Linden Hills depot, or order from the museum's online store.



This map appeared in the St. Paul paper about 1930. It shows the St. Paul streetcar system at its largest, including even the former St. Paul Southern trackage in Inver Grove that was run by TCRT only from 1928 to 1933. In this era before urban sprawl, any resident of St. Paul could reach downtown in less than a half hour, often less than 15 minutes. In today's parlance, this would be "green", the epitome of transit-oriented development. We can learn from from has been lost.

2:17 PM: A gate car leaving the North Side yard prepares to turn left onto Washington Avenue for the deadhead trip to downtown. Jim Neubauer photo.

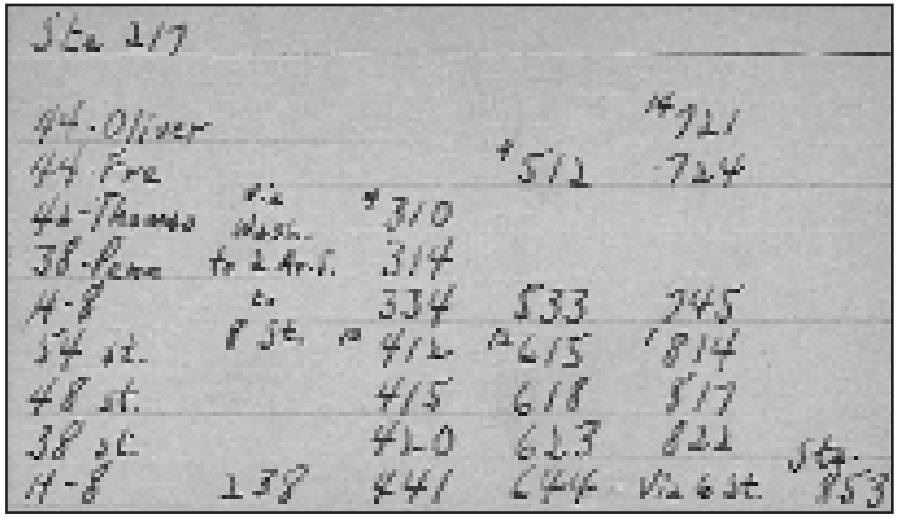
THE 2:17 FREMONT

-Edwin Nelson

Always one of the heaviest lines in the system, Chicago-Penn-Fremont required 75 streetcars during the PM rush hour and 27 during the midday. Cars ran every three minutes during the rush and every five minutes during the midday. It was operated entirely by North Side Station, in fact it represented over 80 percent of that station's peak car requirement. What follows is a first person account of a typical busy run, written years ago by the late Edwin Nelson.

The 2:17 Fremont was almost the most unpopular job on the extra board my first year at North Side. Every trip went to 54th & Chicago, which meant we were snowed under every trip, even if we hooked on to the car ahead. Pulling out "LOOP" down Washington Ave. wasn't bad; we had company. A Bryant was three

2:28 PM: Passing 1st Avenue N., Ed's car was mixed in with other pullouts, as well as in-service cars on the Plymouth, Robbinsdale and N. Washington lines. Minnesota Historical Society collection.


Sta 217

4-Oliver				#721
44-Fre			#512	724
46-Plymo	via Wash.	#310		
38-Penn	to 2 Av. S.	314		
H-8	to	334	533	745
54 st.	& 5 st.	#416	#615	#814
48 st.		415	618	817
38 st.		#410	613	821
H-8	138	#441	644	via 6 st. 853

This is Ed Nelson's hand-copied timecard for the "2:17 Fremont". It left North Side Station at 2:17 PM and returned there at 8:53 PM. To follow the car's progress, read each column from top to bottom. The tiny numbers next to some times indicate the number of minutes of scheduled layover at the ends of the line, followed by the departure time.

2:38 PM: With the Foshay Tower in the background, a northbound Chicago-Penn car on 8th Street is about to cross Hennepin Avenue.

minutes ahead of us; a Robbinsdale, one minute; a Plymouth, four minutes. A Minnehaha Falls at 2nd Ave. No. was on the Bryant's time.

At Hennepin the conductor came up front and changed the sign to "CHICAGO-PENN." Turning up 2nd Ave. So., we'd strain our eyes for our Fremont leader coming up 6th St., three minutes ahead of us. So through the loop for our only Penn trip. If we were lucky, and there was no big sale on, we might get away with just seats full. At 42nd and Thomas, when the 3:04 left, the con went "ding-ding-ding" to back up. We left the gates open for passengers, and went to the drug store for refreshments.

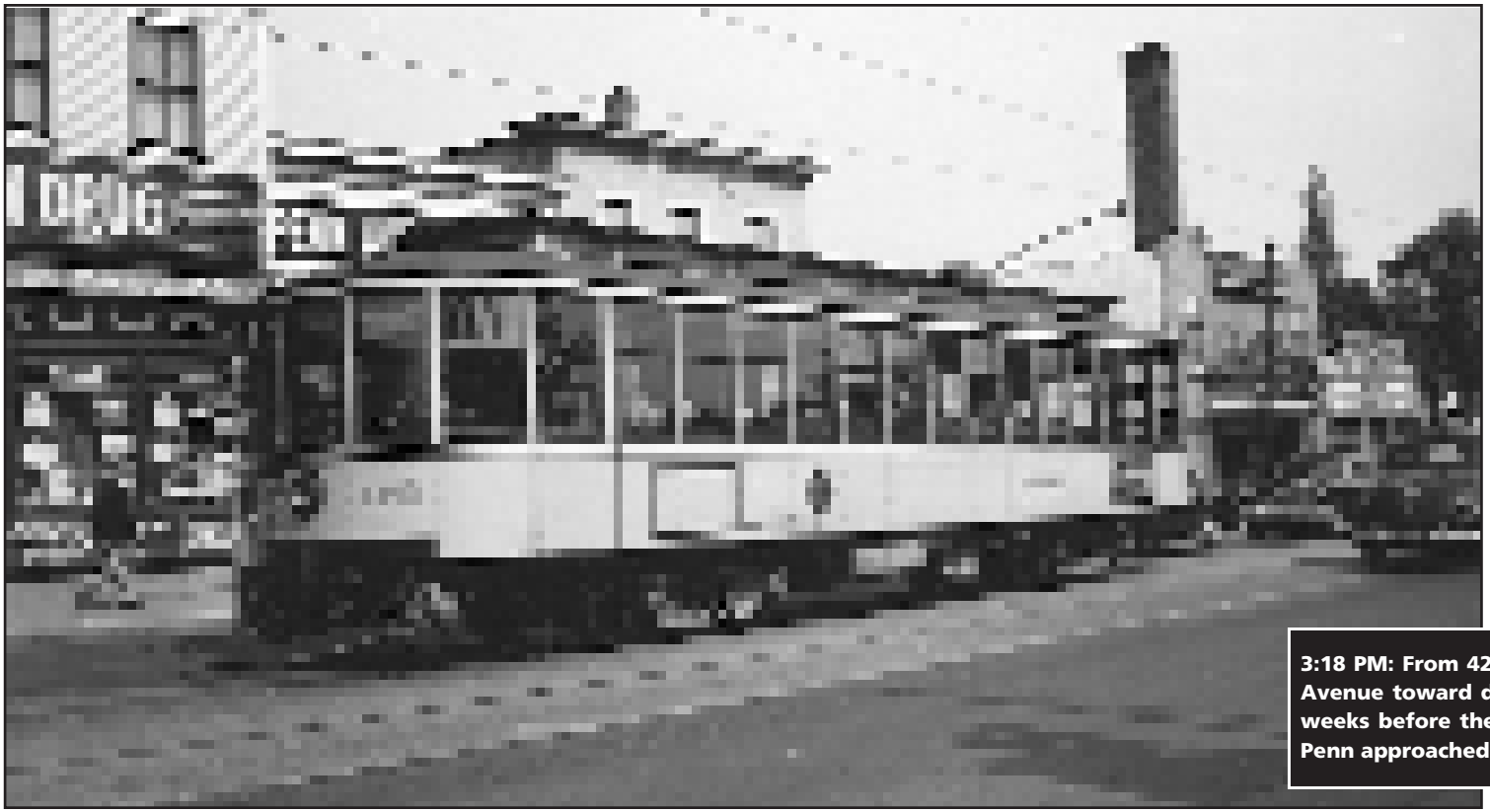
At 3:10 we set out, making nearly every stop now, and I'd swing my hands from the controller to brakes or brakes to gates to ice cream cone. We had to hit Broadway and Emerson just right, and fall in a minute behind a pullout from the station, who led us to 38th St. We stayed a block behind him, and still got a standing load; riders from the schools and the stores and the hospitals, workers out early, ladies out visiting, mama and the kids, fast-steppers, "ding-ding".

Before we left 54th and Chicago at 4:11, the shuttle bus would bring us 10 or 15 riders, and then there'd be four or six on every corner down to 38th, where our Fremont leader had left four minutes earlier. (A Penn from the station was two minutes ahead of us downtown; we seldom saw it.) So all the way to town they got on and they got off, till we hit 2nd & 6th at 4:36; and there we got the works, from all the offices out at 4:30, stock boys and bankers, file clerks and secretaries, messengers and typists, plain ones, pretty ones, thin ones, fat ones, short ones, tall ones, "six tokens? Yes'm," "twelve, yes sir," 7th St., 8th St., Marquette, "Leave by the FRONT doors, please," Nicollet, LaSalle, Hennepin, "Step RIGHT up to the front of the car, PULLEEEEZZZ." And at Plymouth and at Broadway, the corners were crowded with factory workers transferring from the Washington Ave. cars; and if five people got off, 15 got on!

At 44th & Fremont, we'd catch our breath and watch for a car from Oliver going to 38th. We were two minutes behind him all the way and didn't want him out of our sight. We hit Hennepin at 5:33, and all the stores had closed at 5:30, just so they could ride with us, it seemed.

Another breather at 54th St. From there at 6:15 we had a Penn three minutes ahead; and this trip, while not so heavy, was very important. We fairly flew up Fremont, and pulled way up in the wye at Oliver so the next car could wye ahead and go home; and then we had coffee. Which we really needed for the next trip, for now on every comer was someone going out for the

3:01 PM: A Penn car backs out of the 42nd Avenue N. leg of the wye onto Thomas Avenue, the end of the line. Ed's departure is at 3:10. Robert Selle photo.



3:18 PM: From 42nd and Thomas, Ed headed down Penn Avenue toward downtown and south Minneapolis. Two weeks before the June 13, 1953 abandonment, a car on Penn approached Lowry Avenue. Art Rusterholz photo.

turn "GO," but we had four men to pick up at 38th. We stopped there on a dime (or a 7-1/2 cent token), and I had hardly swung the gates out when my con, Bill Logan, gave me the "ding-ding!" and I slammed the gates shut and wound her up; and in the intersection I could hear the bobby sign "click" as it changed, and the swish of air as Danny O'Connell started out of the wye. So we rolled and rolled, till we clattered over the trackwork at North Side; which made so much noise one night (in car 1443) that the foreman looked up and noticed the clock, and bawled me out for being 12 minutes early!

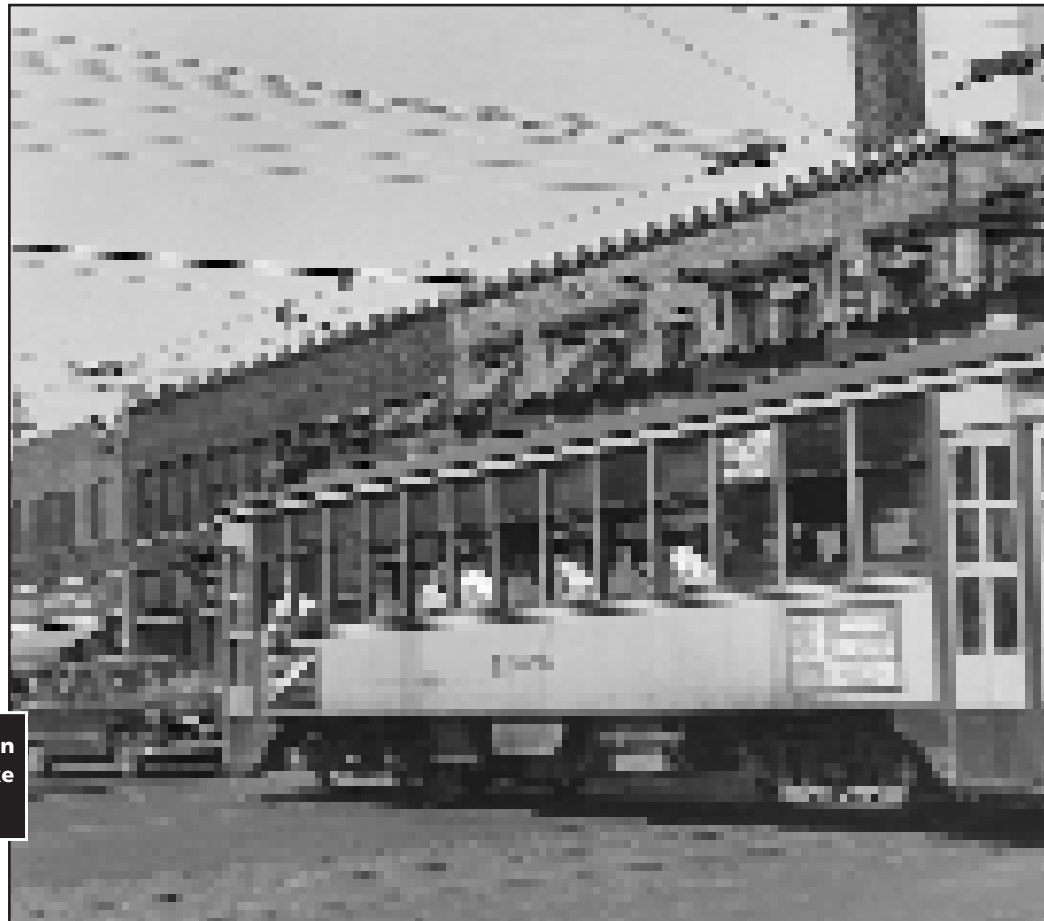
evening, and we were also just in time for the loads from the Lowry bus and Broadway and Plymouth cars. Out Chicago, the service was five minutes, and we had it in the corner all the time unless the gates were open.

At 54th we had one minute to turn around and roll the signs for the main trip, "N. WASH. TO 26TH." And if there weren't too many stops, and we could be one minute ahead at 38th, we could beat a Fremont night run car there. I'll never forget one night in car 1380. At 39th I could see the bobby sign

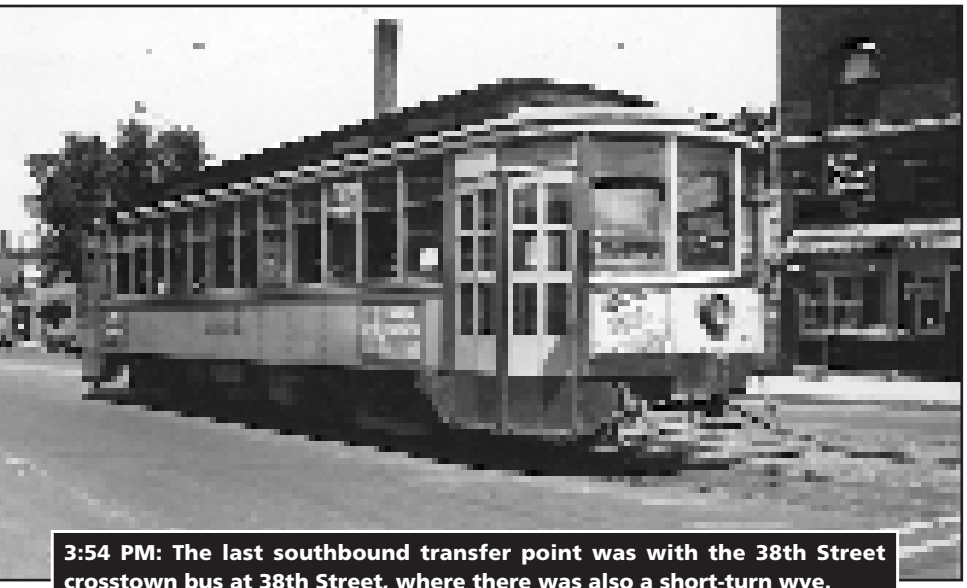
3:33 PM: Descending from the 7th Street bridge that spanned the Great Northern and Minneapolis & St. Louis on the north edge of downtown, a southbound car crosses 2nd Avenue N. It will turn right onto the track in the foreground leading to 8th Street. William Monypenny photo.

3:34 PM: Unlike the car in this photo, Ed was headed for 54th Street. The Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern's offices were in the Northwestern Federal Building, hence their logo in the second floor window. Norton & Peel photo.

3:39 PM: Chicago cars traveled through downtown on 8th Street to 2nd Avenue S. and is shown here turning from 2nd Avenue onto 6th Street.

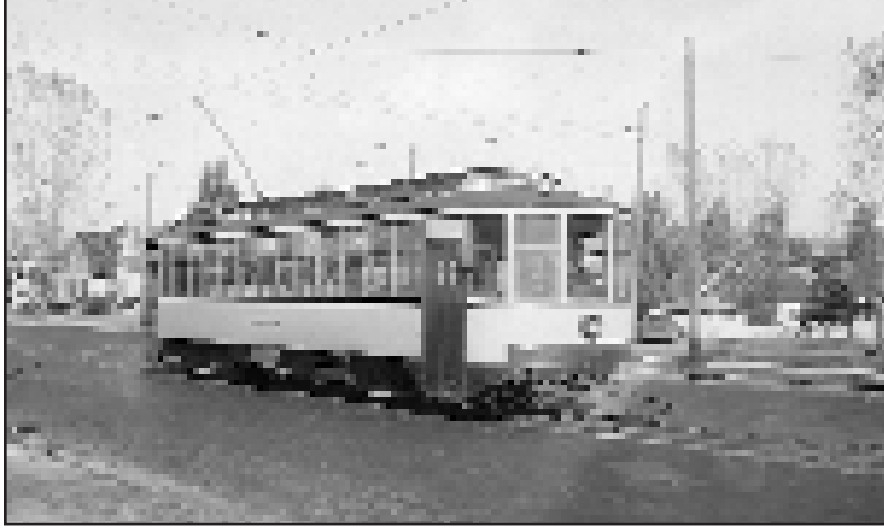


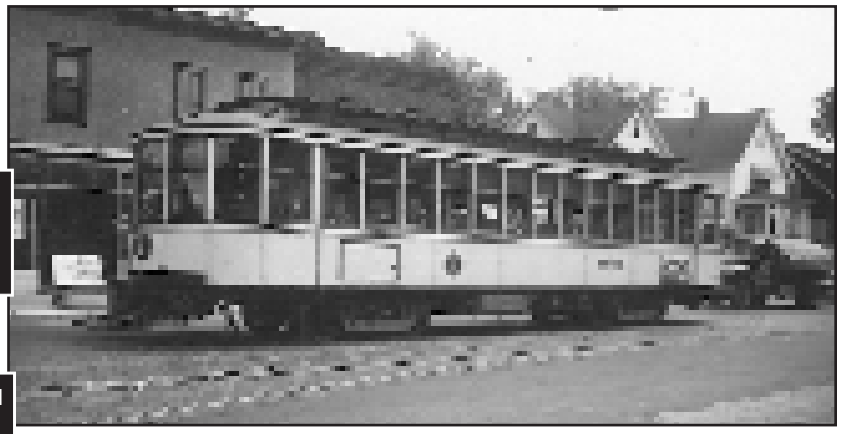
3:50 PM: The biggest non-downtown transfer point in Minneapolis has always been Lake and Chicago. Even now, 3000 people per day transfer between Chicago and Lake Street buses. Note the Sears store in the background. Robert Selle photo.



3:54 PM: The last southbound transfer point was with the 38th Street crosstown bus at 38th Street, where there was also a short-turn wye. Art Rusterholz photo.

4:02 PM: The car pulled across 54th Street and backed into the wye on the east side of the intersection. During the 10-minute layover they reset the destination signs, filled out the trip sheet, changed to northbound transfers and picked up any litter. In winter, they also had to stoke the coal stove and refill the sander hopper.





4:20 PM: Crossing 38th Street again, with the wye switch in the foreground. Art Rusterholz photo.

5:13 PM: Imagine that Ed has just left the 44th and Fremont wye, tucked up against Victory Memorial Drive.

5:22 PM: The busiest stop in north Minneapolis was West Broadway and Emerson, transfer point with the Broadway crosstown streetcar and (after 1948) with the Robbinsdale bus, shown here. Robert Selle photo.

5:53 PM: Two ladies alight at 34th and Chicago. Stuart King photo.

5:34 PM: Dayton's dominated the corner of 8th and Nicollet.

5:57 PM: Looking south toward 39th Street. Stuart King photo

6:16 PM: Dropping down the hill to Minnehaha Creek. Art Rusterholz photo

6:03 PM: The southbound car passes the Swedish Bakery just before wying out at 54th Street, during the last month of service. Art Rusterholz photo

7:10 PM: Having turned the car on the wye at 44th & Oliver, the crew is laying over in the middle of 44th facing east, awaiting the 5:12 departure. Heck out the building in the left background. Almost looks like an interurban carbody. W. C. Whittaker photo.

SONG OF THE 2:17

(To the tune of
"California Here We Come")

54th St., here we come,
Right back where we started from;
For hours and hours we haul everything,
All carstops are our stops,
It's ring-ring-ring and then ding-ding
He is lost who hesitates,
We ain't got no time for waits,
So wind it up and swing them gates
54th St., here we come!

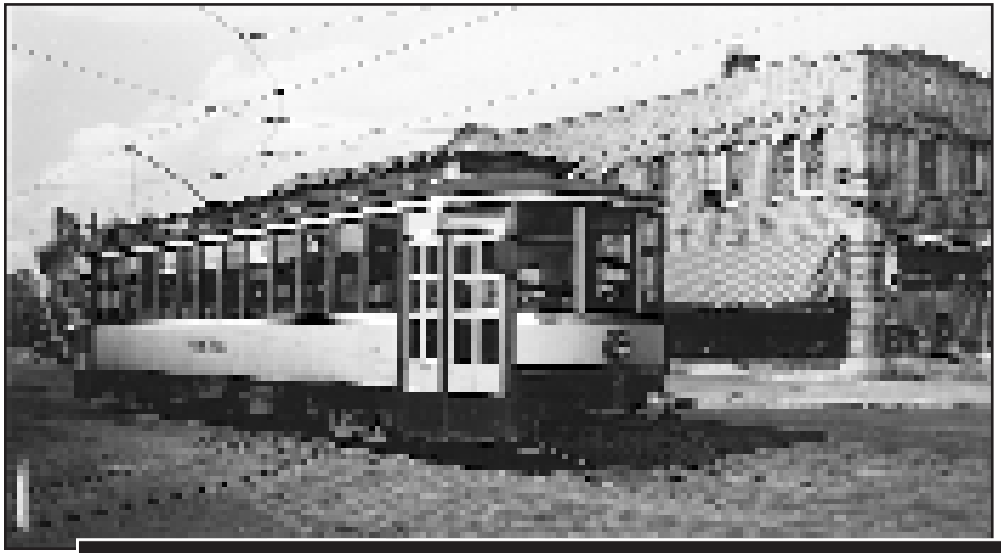
7:50 PM: The Hennepin County Government Center now dominates this view of 6th Street at 5th Avenue S.

THE FRANCHISE CAR

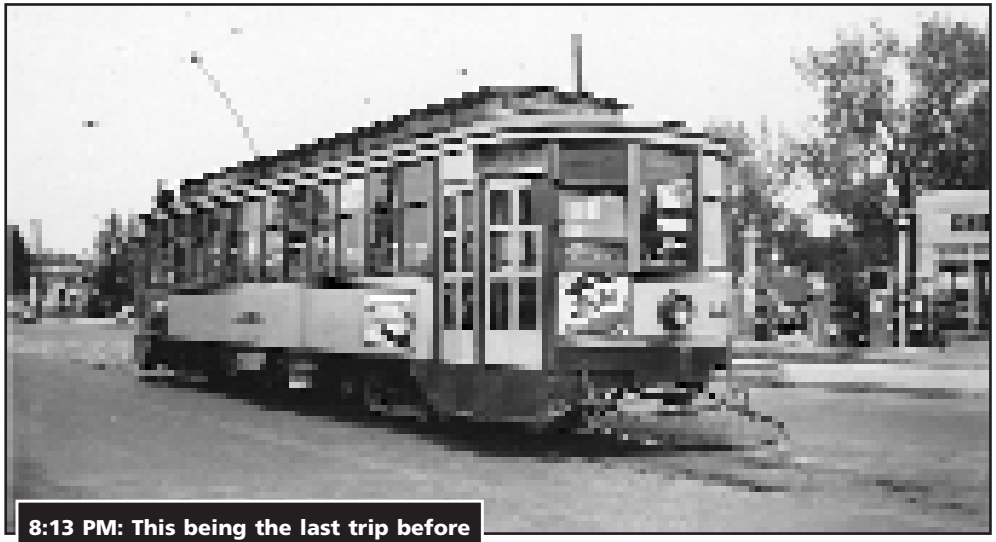
-Russell Olson

The Chicago-Penn-Fremont line and Selby-Lake lines were converted to bus on July 11, 1953, but the wires weren't pulled down. As John Diers reported in the Summer 2007 TCL, the company was embroiled in a lawsuit with the city over who would pay for track removal and street repaving. Running one streetcar per week provided the legal fig leaf that the line was still in operation, forestalling the immediate need to resolve the issue.

Leaving the line in this "zombie" state made possible a final fan trip by the Minnesota Railfans Association on November 1. PCC car #406 was chartered and covered the Plymouth-East 25th Street, Fort Snelling, Bryant-Johnson and Chicago-Penn-Fremont lines. The charter also made a trip over the Interurban, the St. Paul portion of which had been abandoned just three days earlier on October 28. It was the last streetcar into downtown St. Paul.



8:10 PM: Quite a few streetcars shortlined at the 48th Street wye (including the one laying over on 48th in the next photo), diverging at left. W. C. Whittaker and Art Rusterholz photos



8:13 PM: This being the last trip before pullin, the crew has one minute at 54th Street to wye the cars, change the signs, etc., before heading back downtown and then to North Side Station. Art Rusterholz photo

According to Ed Nelson's operating notes, there were 20 weeks of once-per-week franchise streetcars. The last runs were:

FREMONT: Thursday November 12, 1953, car 369 from East Side Station; left 36th & Fremont 12:50 AM, pullin 1:26 AM.

PENN: Thursday November 26, 1953, car 1314 from East Side Station; left 42nd & Thomas 1:30 AM, pullin 2:15 AM.

CHICAGO: Thursday November 26, 1953, car 1324 from East Side Station; left 54th & Chicago 1:35 AM, pullin 2:10 AM.

8:34 PM: This being a pullin trip, it followed 6th Street all the way through downtown, rather than turning west to 8th Street. Actually, this photo was taken after September 1952, when the northbound Chicago-Penn-Fremont cars were rerouted through downtown on 6th Street, because 8th Street had been converted to a one-way. They rejoined the old route at 1st Avenue N.

THE OBSCURE N. EMERSON LINE

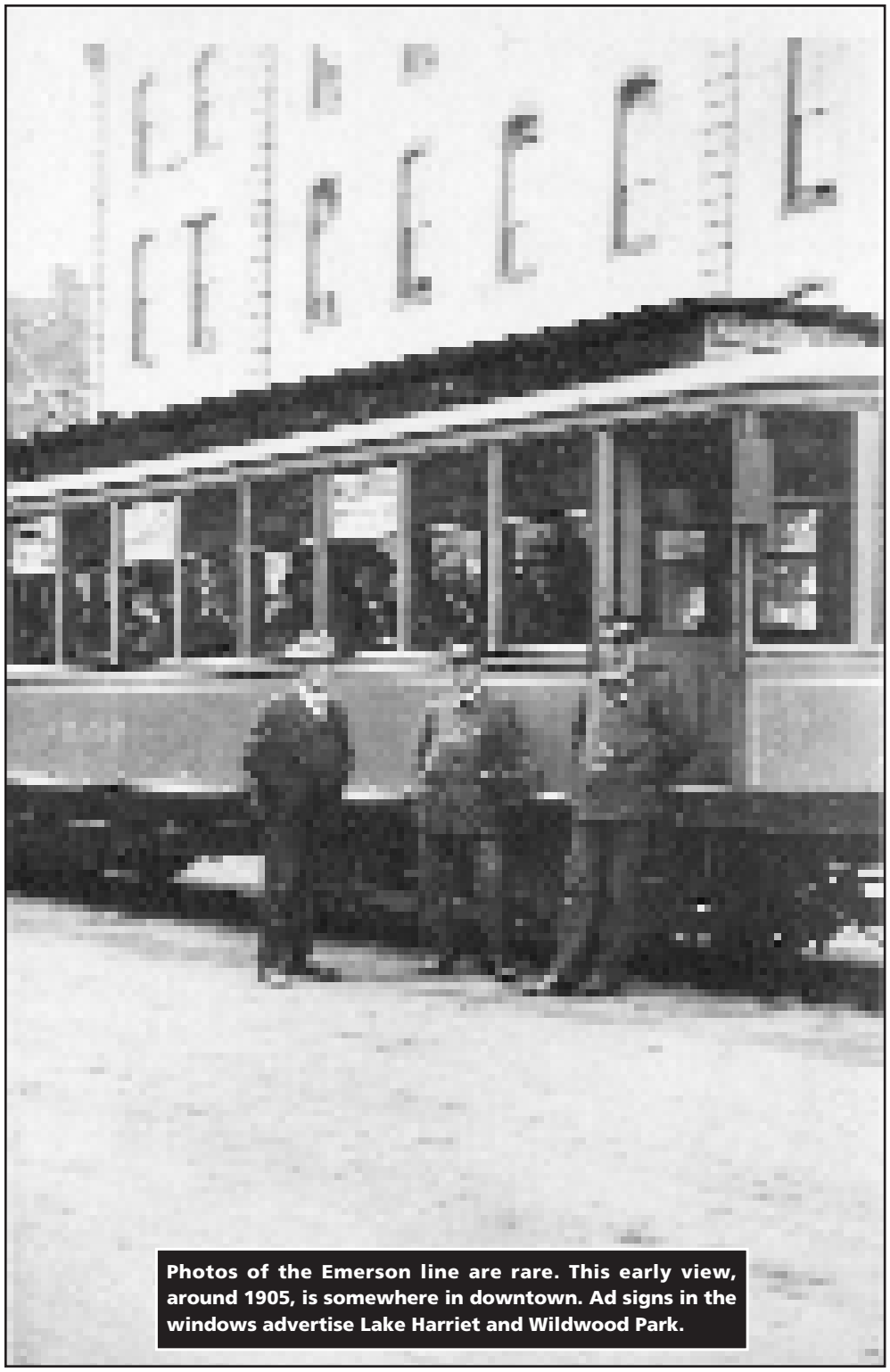
-Aaron Isaacs

As a rule, all of TCRT's streetcar lines featured all day service, seven days a week. However, after 1940 there was a little-noticed exception, the N. Emerson line. It ran only a few trips during rush hours and disappeared quietly in 1950.

Emerson Avenue was actually a very old operation, dating back to horsecars. For almost half a century, horsecars and electric cars used Washington Avenue to reach north Minneapolis. In the late 19th century, Washington was the center of downtown. The North Washington line that ran all the way to Camden was the trunk, and other lines branched to the west at 6th Avenue N., Plymouth Avenue and Broadway. In 1889, the Broadway line itself grew a branch that traveled north on Emerson Avenue to 32nd Avenue N., later renamed Lowry Avenue.

Electrified in 1891, the Emerson line was paired end-to-end with the Cedar Avenue line in south Minneapolis in 1894. In 1910 it was paired with Chicago Avenue, producing what would soon be called the Chicago-Penn-Fremont line that divided into the Penn and Fremont lines at Broadway and Emerson. Track was extended on Fremont to 42nd Avenue N. in 1912 and to 44th Avenue N. in 1914.

And so it remained until 1920, when TCRT built a new line from Broadway and Emerson to downtown via Emerson Avenue to the Plymouth-N. 7th Street intersection, and then 7th Street. The center of downtown had moved away from the river and Chicago cars now ran through the new heart of downtown on 8th Street. The new line was much more direct, cutting several minutes off travel time from the north side.



Photos of the Emerson line are rare. This early view, around 1905, is somewhere in downtown. Ad signs in the windows advertise Lake Harriet and Wildwood Park.

The new line opened on December 1, 1920. However, the old Emerson line via Washington Avenue kept running, now paired with the East 25th Street line. Two lines now served Emerson, one to the new center of downtown on 8th Street, one to the old center of downtown on Washington. TCRT only did this one other time. Cedar Avenue in south Minneapolis was also served by two lines that split at Franklin Avenue and passed through different parts of downtown. Why did this happen?

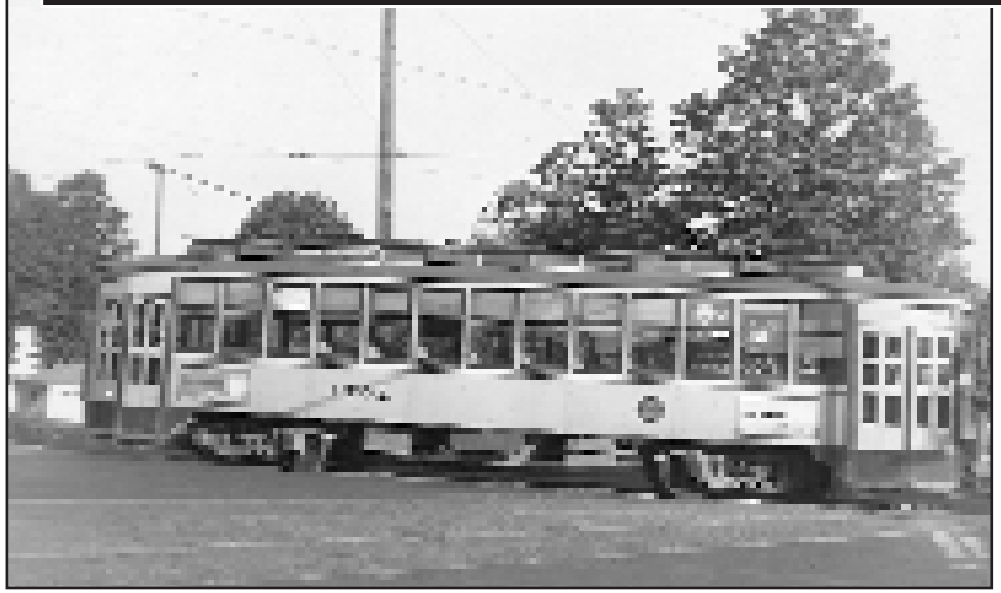
We don't know for sure, but it's easy to guess that the old Washington Avenue alignment with all its industry had quite a few loyal riders who would have been inconvenienced by the route change. TCRT kept enough service in place to mollify them, even though it duplicated the Robbinsdale line for much of its length. The Emerson cars terminated at 36th Avenue N., while the Chicago-Fremont cars continued to 44th.

In 1921, the East 25th Street line was paired with Kenwood and N. Emerson was combined with Cedar Avenue. Due to south Minneapolis track construction that that extended the Cedar Avenue line out 28th Avenue, the name was changed in 1926 to 28th Avenue South-N. Emerson.

Full service continued through the 1930s, probably burning a hole in TCRT's pocket. In 1940, TCRT abandoned the Franklin Avenue line and reshuffled its service. Franklin had been paired with Robbinsdale. The combined line traveled through downtown on 11th Street, then followed the Chicago-Penn-Fremont up the 7th Street shortcut to Broadway, then west to Robbinsdale.

With the demise of Franklin, Robbinsdale was paired with 28th Avenue S., only via Broadway and Washington. Emerson service was reduced to rush hours only and ran as a branch off the new Robbinsdale-28th Avenue S. line.

Edwin Nelson documented a number of lines in their last days. He took these photos on August 18, 1950, one day before the line quit. During its final years, it was down to a handful of rush hour trips. Car 1841 turns from northbound Washington Avenue to westbound Broadway. In the other view, car 1701 backs into the wye at 36th and Fremont Avenue N.



The Robbinsdale line quit in 1948. Thereafter, 28th Avenue S. cars terminated downtown, except for the few Emerson trips that went north each rush hour. That continued until the 28th Avenue line itself was abandoned, along with the six remaining daily Emerson trips. The last day was August 19, 1950.

To handle the former Emerson Line passengers, two extras were added to the Chicago-Fremont. The Chicago-Fremont cars were cut back from 44th and Oliver to 36th and Fremont in May 1952. From then until they too were abandoned in July 1953, Chicago-Fremont cars wyed at 36th Avenue N., the old Emerson terminus.

The line wasn't quite dead. Due to the fight with the city over abandonment (described in the Summer 2007 TCL) TCRT continued to run one car per week over the line. This zombie-like operation lasted until November 26, 1953.

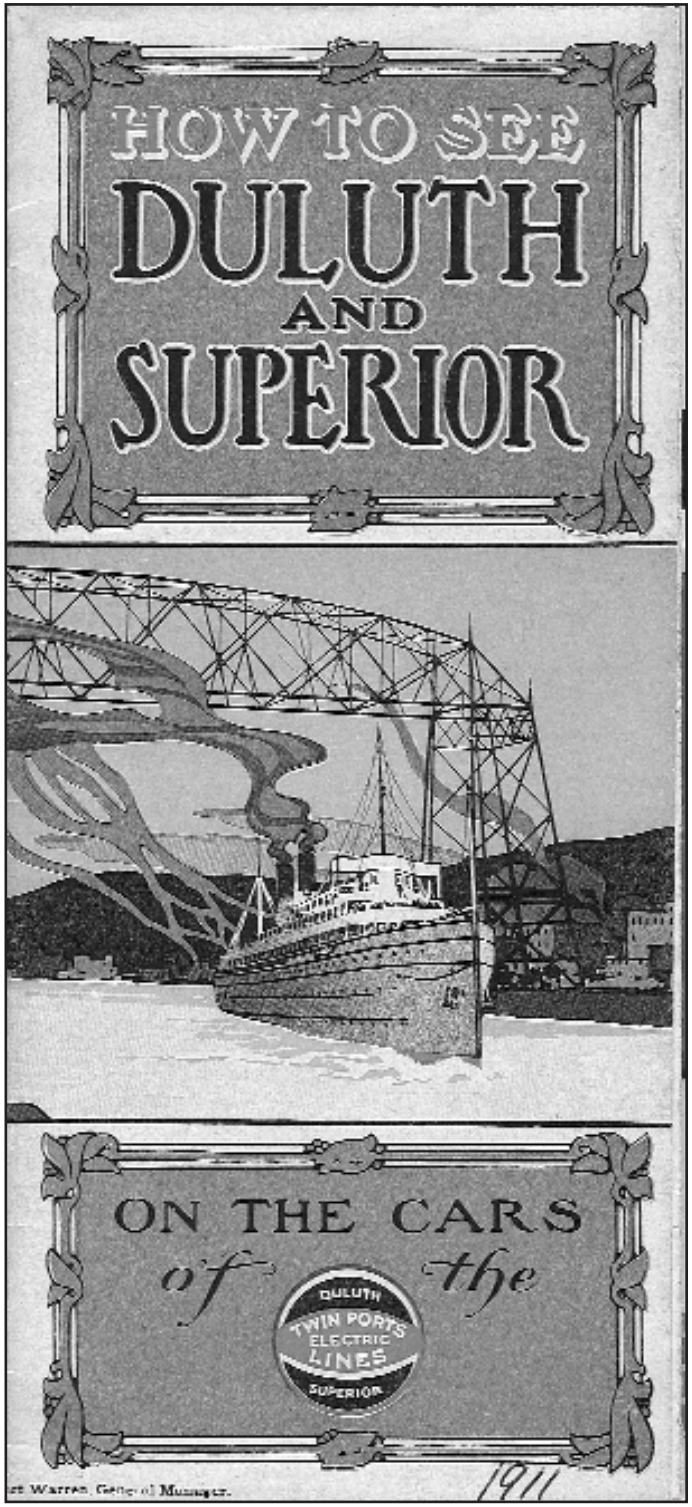
Ever since the streetcars abandoned, the Emerson-Fremont corridor has continued to be paired with Chicago Avenue and together they form the busiest Minneapolis bus route. Interestingly, a small vestige of the alternate Emerson service via Washington Avenue survived until July 2007.

Because the Penn and Fremont lines merged at Broadway and Emerson, there were two hourly "owl" cars (one for Penn, one for Fremont) running together from Broadway to downtown to make the lineups from midnight to 5 AM. Rather than run as a double-header south of Broadway, TCRT ran the Penn owl downtown via Broadway and Washington, while the Fremont owl took N. 7th Street. The two met to exchange passengers at Broadway and Emerson, so all origins and destinations were served.

TCRT discontinued most of the owls in the mid-1960s, but the 5 AM downtown arrivals survived, and so did the pair of owls via the two different routes. It finally ended this year when the Penn route was rerouted via Olson Highway. In the new timetable, however, there remains a note on the 5 AM Fremont trip that it will make a 2-minute connection at Broadway and Fremont with the current Robbinsdale bus, which travels to downtown via Washington.

On May 17, 1952, the Fremont line was abandoned north of the 36th Avenue N. wye. A month later, Ray De Groote caught the streetcar and its connecting connecting shuttle bus there.

The November 1, 1953 MRA excursion visits 54th and Chicago. The replacement bus in the background has been running since July. Bob Schumacher photo.

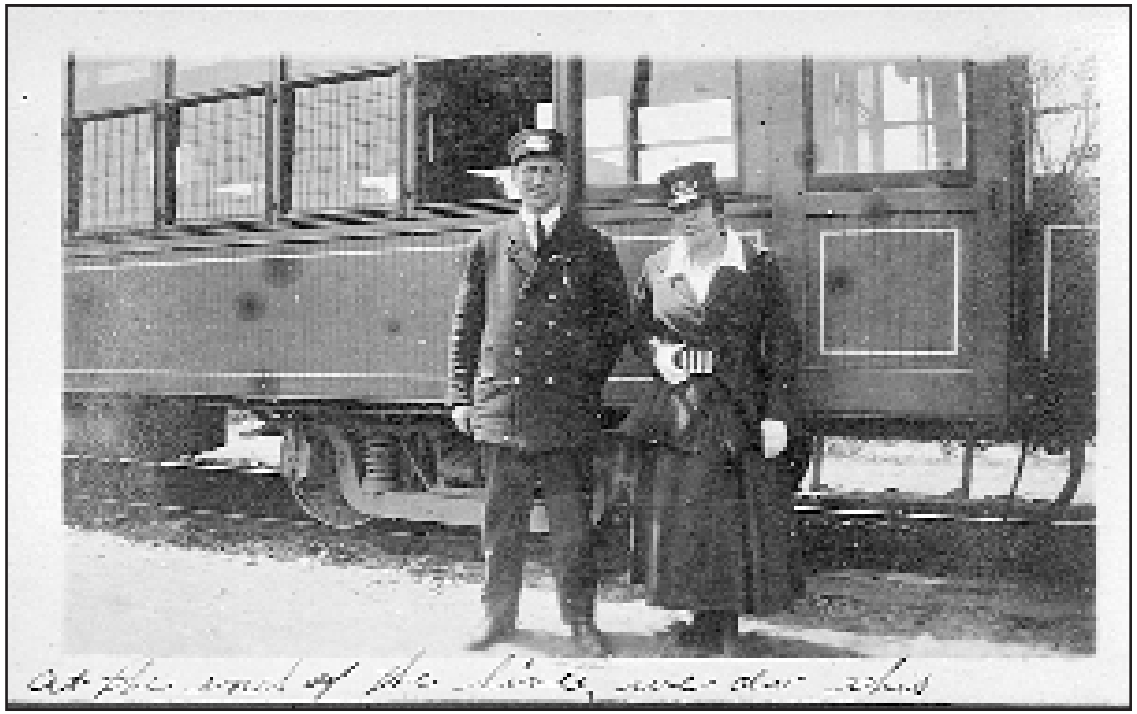


WORLD WAR I MOTORETTES

TCL readers are probably well acquainted with the story of the World War II motorettes, who stepped in to keep TCRT running, mostly during the period 1943-46. Recently photos have surfaced that show they weren't the first women to run streetcars in Minnesota. They reveal that women were pressed into service 25 years earlier, during the first World War. And not just in the Twin Cities, in Duluth as well.

This is the only known photo of female TCRT streetcar operators during World War I. Their badge numbers indicate that they worked at North Side Station. Gary Lovegren collection.

Duluth's women operators pose at the carhouse on June 21, 1918 and at the end of a line (below). The above photo is related to the rear cover, taken three days later.



DESPERATE ADVERTISING

By the mid-1920s, TCRT's management was frightened, and with good reason. Ridership had grown continuously for over 20 years beginning in 1900, but it peaked at 238 million in 1920 and had been sliding ever since. By the end of 1925 it had dropped 16 percent with no sign of a turnaround. TCRT was pushing all the buttons it knew how to push. It built 40 line extensions into new neighborhoods during the period 1921-1933. It defeated the parasitic jitneys through new city ordinances that banned them, and bought out the competing new buses and taxis. Nothing worked. The culprit was clearly the private automobile.

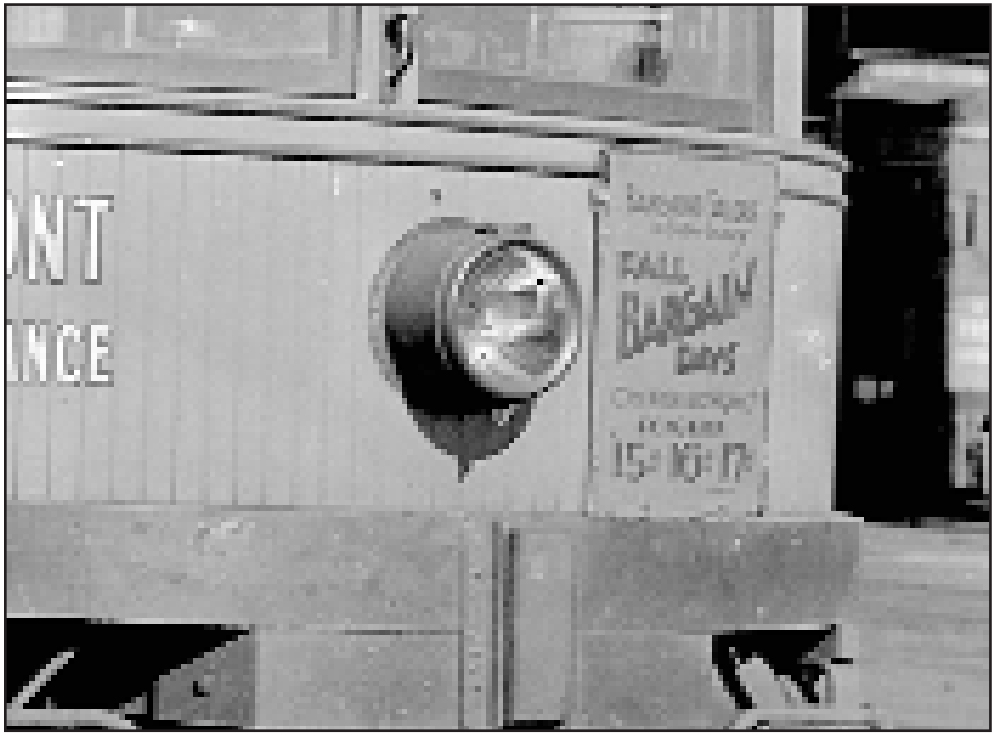
So TCRT turned to marketing. It produced a series of elegant newspaper ads. They were aimed at the middle class, at the office workers, housewives and shoppers who had been the streetcars' bread and butter. It also ran a series of text-heavy, serious appeals describing how lost ridership would harm TCRT's many benefits to the city's health.

Meanwhile, the Duluth Street Railway was hanging signs with similar messages on the front dashes of its cars. These views were included in a purchase of over 500 Duluth negatives that occurred over the winter.

The ads and signs didn't work. The social divide that separated the lower income, transit dependent rider from the auto-owning choice rider had begun. It would only widen.

Save Time
and money
-Read
as you
Ride

No
Engine trouble
Or —
Garage bills
Try our cars -
they satisfy


NT
NCE
BARGAIN
Days

RIDE
-IN-
SAFETY
Avoid
Carelessness
others

THE SIGHTSEER

-Aaron Isaacs

Beginning in 1906, TCRT began a concerted effort to attract tourist ridership. General passenger agent A. W. Warnock produced a series of colorful advertising brochures, including the well-known "Twin Cities Today", "Big Island Park" and "Wildwood Park" that have been reproduced by the museum. These provided detail descriptions of local attractions, along with clear instructions on how to use scheduled streetcars to reach them.

In addition, TCRT ran twice-daily scheduled Sightseer streetcars. They started at St. Paul's Ryan Hotel (Robert and 7th Street) at 8:40 AM and 2:00 PM. From downtown St. Paul they followed the Como-Harriet line to downtown Minneapolis, stopping at the West Hotel (Hennepin and 5th Street) at 9:30 AM and 2:50 PM to pick up more passengers. From there, they continued out the Como-Harriet to the Lake Harriet loop just short of Upton Avenue. Retracing its route to Lake Street, the Sightseer turned east and followed Lake Street to Minnehaha Avenue, and south on that street to Minnehaha Park. There, passengers left the car to walk the short distance to Minnehaha Falls, while the car continued a block south, turned on the Soldiers Home loop and returned to pick them up.

Running back up Minnehaha Avenue to Lake Street, the Sightseer turned east on Lake, crossed the Mississippi River into St. Paul, turned south on Snelling Avenue and east on Grand Avenue. It descended the Grand (then Oakland) Avenue hill to 7th Street, followed 7th to Wabasha Street, to 5th Street and passed through downtown St. Paul on 5th Street. At the east end of downtown, it turned

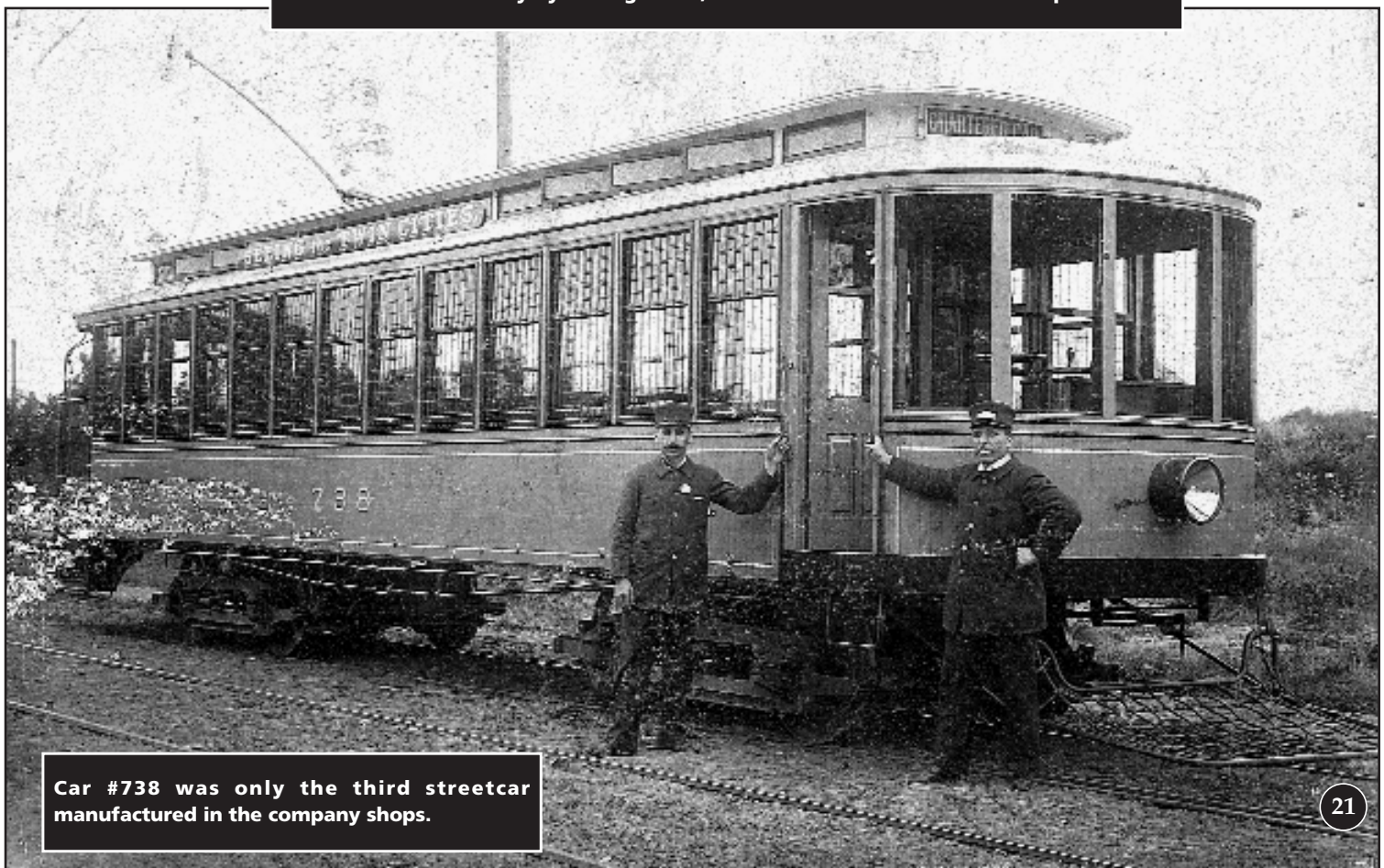
left on Broadway and right on 7th Street, headed for Mounds Park, the last stop. To get there, it followed the Maria line via Maria, Plum Street, Hudson Road and Earl Street. While the car wyed at Mounds Park, the passengers again stepped off to admire the panoramic view of the Mississippi valley. The car returned to the Ryan Hotel to discharge the St. Paul passengers, then repeated the Como Avenue portion of the tour for the Minneapolis passengers, delivering them to the West Hotel. The tour took 3.5 hours.

Russ Olson says the first records of the Sightseer appear in 1898, coinciding with construction of the first TCRT home-built streetcars. The circular route described above was dubbed the "Belt Route", and cost 50 cents. TCRT offered two other Sightseer variations. The Wildwood Sightseer followed the Belt Route and added a side trip to Wildwood Park on White Bear Lake via the Mahtomedi line. It took five hours and cost 75 cents. The Minnetonka Sightseer added a side trip from Lake Harriet to Excelsior, plus an express boat trip on Lake Minnetonka, five hours for $1.00.

Although we don't know for sure, track changes may have modified the tour. In 1909, the cities were connected via Fort Snelling, and it would seem unlikely that a tour that came as close as Minnehaha Falls would not also visit the historic fort. Also in 1909, the track on Earl Street was abandoned two blocks from Mounds Park to Burns Avenue. It seems unlikely that TCRT would have done so if the Sightseer still needed that track.

Olson speculates that the Sightseers disappeared at the start of World War I. 1917 was the last year Warnock published the Twin Cities Today brochure. In later years, TCRT ran sightseer buses for Gray Line. The Metropolitan Transit Commission continued this service into the 1980s.

Sightseers occupy the Mounds Park wye at the south end of Earl Street in about 1903. This track was used only by the Sightseer, and was removed in 1909. Sweet photo.



Car #738 was only the third streetcar manufactured in the company shops.

In this TCRT publicity photo, the Sightseer is returning from Lake Harriet, headed for Lake Street and Minnehaha Park. It's following the Lakewood Cemetery fence. In the distance is the Lakewood stop, where MSM's line ends today. Sweet photo.

Inside rear cover: One Duluth streetcar was equipped with a turnstyle. This may have been an experiment to see if the car could be operated with no conductor, while retaining the rear gates. Note that the turnstyle is mechanically connected to a fare register on the wall, presumably recording one fare for each quarter turn.

Rear cover: On June 18, 1918, Duluth Street Railway employees and their families gather outside the 28th and Superior carhouse for some sort of patriotic ceremony related to World War I. Among them are four women operators, wearing pillbox hats and uniforms with long skirts.

6-14-18.

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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August 2021

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